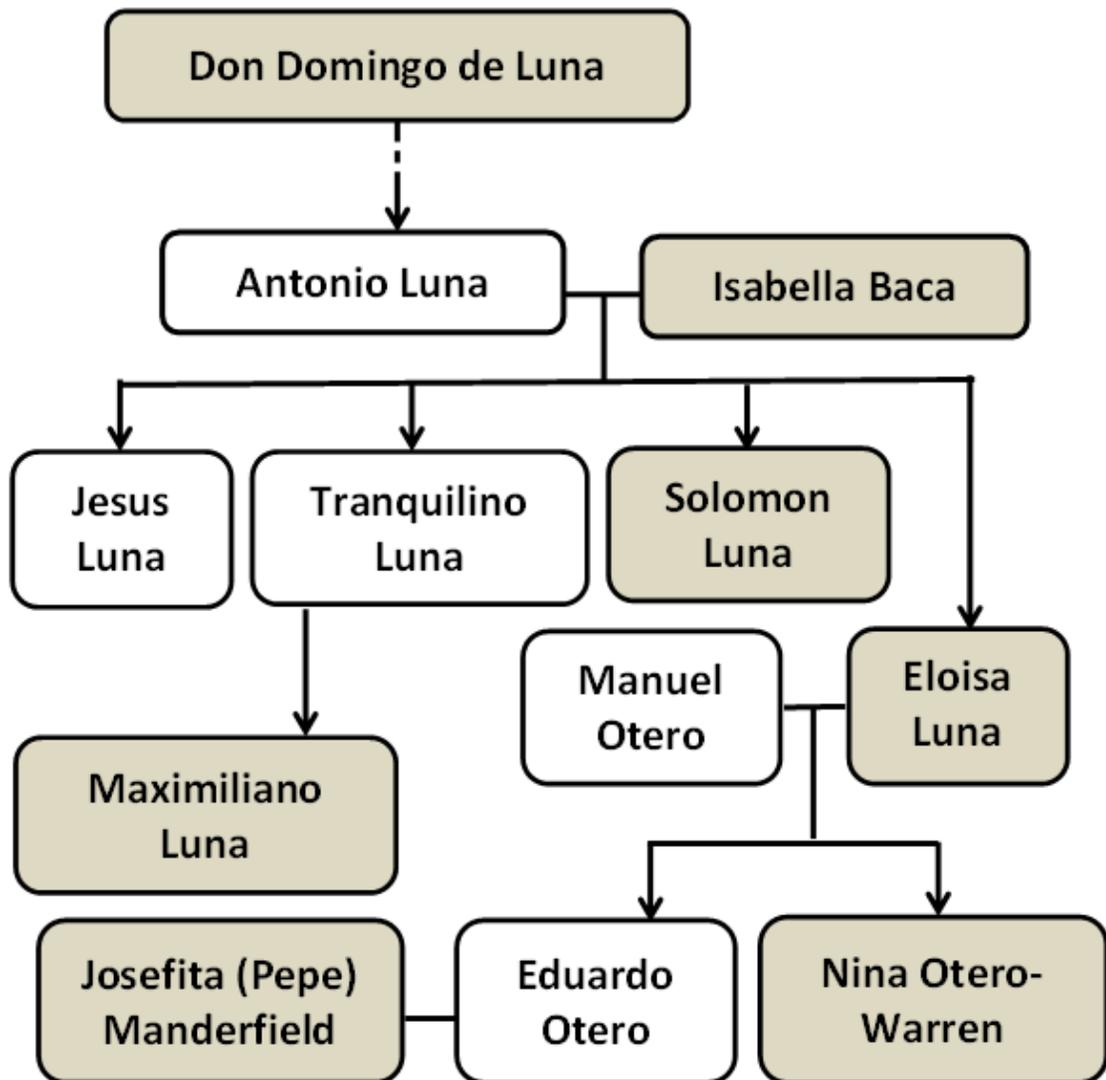


*An Evening
with the
Luna-Otero
Family*



THE LUNA OTERO FAMILY TREE



Shaded boxes indicate family members represented in the production *An Evening with the Luna Otero Family*.

(Not all family members are shown in this tree.)

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:

When I began to research the history of the Luna and Otero families of Valencia County, I found a wealth of material. There were far too many wonderful stories and tidbits of information to include in our show, so I've created this booklet as a way to present some of the information that I wasn't able to include in the performance itself.

I hope you enjoy the show!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Strickland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "N".

Nancy Strickland

Author of
An Evening with the Luna-Otero Family

DON DOMINGO DE LUNA (?? - 1754)

Don Domingo wasn't the first Luna in the New World. The first was his grandfather, Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano, who arrived in 1530 with Hernán Cortés, the conquistador who had earlier defeated the Aztecs to claim Mexico for Spain. Later, Don Tristan travelled with Francisco Coronado, who searched for the mythical Seven Cities of Gold. Other Lunas were members of various expeditions that explored and settled New Mexico between 1540 and 1680.

But all the earliest Spanish settlers were driven out of New Mexico in 1680 when the Pueblo Indians revolted and forced the Spanish to flee south to El Paso. Twelve years later, shortly after the Spanish defeated the Pueblos and re-occupied New Mexico, Don Domingo de Luna came to the Americas, landing at Vera Cruz, Mexico, with his cousin, the Duke of Alburquerque, who was the Viceroy of New Spain.

In 1718, the King of Spain awarded Don Domingo the 90,000 acre San Clemente Land Grant. He brought in the Otero and Baca families as some of the earliest settlers in this area, and all these families became part of the aristocracy of Valencia County, with large landholdings. For generations, these families typically intermarried to keep their lands from being dispersed. The history of the inhabitants of the Luna Mansion includes several such marriages between Lunas, Bacas, and Oteros.

The map on the next page shows the Rio Abajo area about 20 years before the birth of Antonio Jose Luna, who would become known as the father of Los Lunas.

Many, but not all, of the place names on this 230-year old map still exist. You can locate the following places on the map, even though most of their names were spelled differently.

- Albuquerque
- Corrales
- Sandia Pueblo
- Los Padillas
- Isleta Pueblo
- Valencia
- (approximately the area within El Cerro loop today)
- Tomé Hill
- Los Chavez
- Belen
- Sabinal
- Las Nutrias

What is not shown on this map is the village of Los Lunas. The area labeled S (San) Clemente just south of Ysleta is approximately the current location of Los Lunas, but it was not known as Los Lunas until the time of Antonio Jose Luna in the mid-1800s

A portion of a map of New Mexico created by Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, 1779



ANTONIO JOSE LUNA (1808 - 1881)

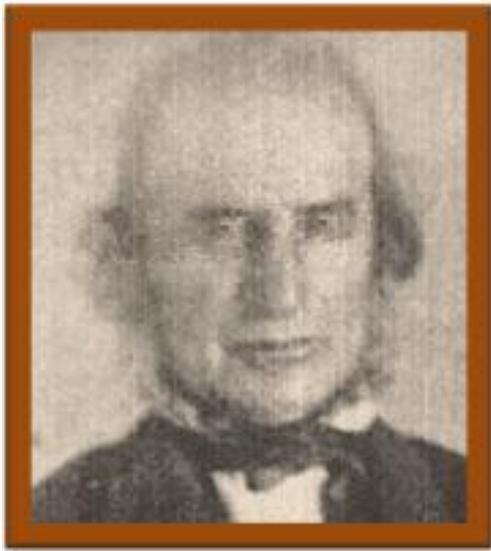


Photo courtesy
Los Lunas Museum

When Antonio Luna was born, his family was already powerful and wealthy, but most of that wealth was tied up in vast land holdings. It was Antonio's successful sheep drives that first provided his family with significant cash.

In 1876, Don Antonio arranged to have the county seat moved from Tome to Los Lunas in 1876, thus ensuring that the little village would prosper, and becoming the "Father of Los Lunas".

Antonio's personal wealth, along with the Santa Fe railroad that provided free transportation for materials, allowed him to make the Luna Mansion the most impressive home in the Rio Abajo. It included luxurious items like a fireplace of Italian rose marble, and one of the first flush toilets in the entire territory. The fireplace screen is said to have been a gift from famous silent-film star Rudolph Valentino.

But the walls of the mansion itself are built of native material, though not the typical adobe of more modest homes at that time.



Terrones in the interior of a
finished wall

Instead, the walls were made of *terrones*, which are sun-dried bricks of heavy clay filled with plant roots. These are cut from swamp, marshland, or riverbed along the Rio Grande valley, and are stronger than an adobe brick, which uses straw instead of roots as binding. The walls of *terrón* were then given a smooth finish and painted.

Dr. Richard Melzer, a specialist in New Mexico history at the University of New Mexico-Valencia County, has suggested that the walls of the mansion are a metaphor for the Lunas themselves. Outwardly, they lived in a house that resembled the new Anglo culture that was slowly moving into New Mexico, but inwardly they remained faithful to their Hispanic New Mexican culture and beliefs.

JESUS MARIA LUNA (1837 - 1888)

In his autobiography *My Life on the Frontier*, Manuel Antonio Otero, who was related to the Lunas by marriage, and was at one time the Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, tells the story of the death of the oldest of Antonio and Isabella Luna's sons, Jesus Maria.

When I arrived in Los Lunas, I called at the home of Don Jesus M Luna for the purpose of borrowing a horse to ride to Peralta. ... While we were waiting, Mr. Luna had a servant bring in some elegant *mistela*, a drink made by his mother, a kind of cordial, and very strong. We took several drinks, and when I mounted the horse, I was feeling quite good.

[After visiting Peralta] I ... was soon back in Los Lunas and found Mr. Luna at his home. We had a splendid dinner and more *mistela*, and as the train was almost due to arrive, we started for the depot, Mr. Luna saying he would accompany me as far as Albuquerque. When we reached the depot, Don Jesus had forgotten something and had to return to his home, saying to me: "I will take the freight train and meet you in Albuquerque a little later," so I went on alone.

When the freight train reached Los Lunas, it did not stop and Mr. Luna attempted to jump on the caboose, but missed his step and fell; one foot landed on the rail in front of the last wheel, which

passed over it. He was picked up by friends and taken home. The doctors wanted to amputate his foot, but Mr. Luna, who was a tall handsome man and loved dancing, said: "No, I would rather die," and he did.¹

¹ Otero, Manuel Antonio. *My Life on the Frontier*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1939.

TRANQUILINO LUNA (1849 - 1892)



Photo courtesy
Library of Congress

Tranquilino Luna, nicknamed “el Guapo” because he was considered the handsomest of the Luna brothers, was the older brother of Solomon. He became the owner of the Luna Mansion after the death of his father, Antonio Jose, and older brother, Jesus Maria. Later, after the death of his wife, Tranquilino sold the mansion to Solomon.

Like so many other Lunas, Tranquilino was active in politics, as the New Mexico delegate to two Republican National Conventions, and as a representative of the Territory of New Mexico in Congress from 1881-1883.

He was re-elected to a second 2-year Congressional term, but his opponent contested the election. The race was decided by the House of Representatives' Committee on Elections, whose investigation found that Tranquillo Luna had won by 4,259 votes in a county that had never had over 2,200 voters, leading to the joke that the Lunas won elections by letting their sheep vote!² The election-day records from some parts of the county even showed that all the voters appeared to have come to the polling place and cast their ballots in perfect alphabetical order, just as their names appeared on the voter registration lists. And

so in 1884, two years after the election, Tranquilino's seat was awarded to his opponent.³

He returned home and in 1888 became Sheriff of Valencia County, a position formerly held by his older brother Jesus Maria, and he remained Sheriff until he died only 4 years later.

² Campbell, Tracy. *Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, an American Political Tradition--1742-2004*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005.

³ *Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Forty-Eighth Congress, 1883-84*. Volume 9, Number 17, pages 1-286. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1884.

SOLOMON LUNA (1858-1912)

Solomon Luna was well-educated and sophisticated, but he was also at home in the rough-and-tumble of New Mexico politics. He was never elected to a high state office, but he exercised a great deal of power behind the scenes through his money, his connections, and his own political skill. Many officials owed their positions to Sol Luna's support and were quite willing to oblige him if he needed their services in return.



Photo courtesy
Luna Mansion

Sol also had political opponents who tried to diminish his power. One of their goals was to divide Valencia County, which at that time stretched from Texas to Arizona and provided Sol with reliably Republican votes. When election results from Valencia came in late, some suspected the Republicans had waited to see how many more votes were needed to win before submitting falsified tallies.

Alfred Bergere, who married Sol's sister Eloisa after her first husband died, tells of helping his brother-in-law defeat one such attack. "At midnight, I was awakened and informed that the Democrats were going to attempt to pass the bill dividing the county and the next morning I

had to buy the Democrats in the House to adjourn for three days. This cost me nearly \$400.00." ⁴



Sheep dip trench similar to that in which
Solomon Luna's body was discovered

Photo courtesy
Barbara Bergere Nau

Given the state of New Mexico politics at the time, it's no wonder that some people speculated that his political enemies might have had a role in Sol's unusual death.

⁴ Quoted in Kanak, Sandra. *Adopt Is a Powerful Word*, Pittsburgh, PA, Dorrance Publishing, 2009.

DIES IN HIS SHEEP VAT.

**National Committeeman Solomon
Luna Found Dead on His Ranch.**

ALBUQUERQUE, N. M., Aug. 30.—Solomon Luna, for the last 16 years Republican National Committeeman from New Mexico, the largest individual owner of sheep in the Southwest, and the State's richest citizen, was found dead to-day at his ranch, 75 miles west of Magdalena, Socorro County.

The body was discovered in a sheep dipping vat, and was so badly burned in the lime solution as to be almost unrecognizable.

**Sol's obituary in
The New York Times**

MANUEL BASILIO OTERO (1860-1883) and ELOISA LUNA OTERO BERGERE (1864-1914)



Photo courtesy
Los Lunas Museum

In the gunfight which killed Manuel Otero, the man who shot him, James Whitney of Boston, was wounded. He was taken under arrest to a hospital in Santa Fe. His brother, Joel, wanted to remove James from the reach of the local law authorities, so he strapped the wounded man down and lowered him from a second-story hospital window with ropes and pulleys to a

waiting carriage which took the brothers to their private railroad car on a train going north.

When the escape was discovered, the governor telegraphed the county sheriff and Manuel's cousin Miguel, ordering them to catch the escapee and return him to Los Lunas for trial. The two men raced after the train on horseback, attempting to cut it off before it could make it to the border. They intercepted the train outside of Las Vegas, subdued Joel Whitney at gunpoint, and then uncoupled the brother's private car and attached it to another locomotive going south to Los Lunas, where a large crowd, a potential lynch mob, had gathered at the depot.



However, before it reached Los Lunas, the train stopped in Albuquerque, where Judge Joseph Bell boarded it, saying he was holding a bond hearing right there on the train. He ordered James Whitney released on bail. The Whitneys paid the bail immediately, and had their private car re-attached to the very next train going to California. Rumor had it that Joel Whitney gave Judge Bell's brother \$50,000 for his help.

The following year, James Whitney returned to New Mexico and was tried for the murder of Manuel Otero, but he was tried in Springer, rather than in Valencia County, and was found not guilty, based on self-defense. Again, there were widespread rumors that this judge had also been bribed by the Whitneys.⁵

⁵ Otero, Miguel Antonio'
My Life on the Frontier,
1882-1897, Santa Fe,
NM, Sunstone Press,
2007



Eloisa Luna

Photo courtesy Barbara Bergere Nau

MAXIMILIANO LUNA (1870 - 1899)



Photo courtesy
Luna Mansion

Maximiliano Luna served in the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, better known as the "Rough Riders". According to Theodore Roosevelt, who became the head of the Rough Riders and later President of the United States: "One of the Captains chosen was Captain Maximilian Luna. The Captain's people had been on the banks of the Rio Grande before my

forefathers came to the mouth of the Hudson ...and he made the plea that it was his right to go..., for he was the only man of pure Spanish blood who bore a commission in the army, and he demanded the privilege of proving that his people were precisely as loyal Americans as any others. I was glad when it was decided to take him."⁶



Max as a Rough Rider,
on right behind
Roosevelt

But Max almost missed the war. When the Rough Riders arrived in Tampa, Florida, to board ships for the journey to Cuba, there wasn't enough space on the ships for everyone. The decision of who would go and who would stay was decided by a coin toss, which Max won.

After Max's death later in the Spanish-America war, his body was never found, so he has no grave or tombstone,

unlike his father and grandfather, who were buried in the yard of the old San Clemente church in Los Lunas. However, his name is the first listed on the monument to the Rough Riders in Arlington National Cemetery, and his bust is on display in the Capitol building in Santa Fe.



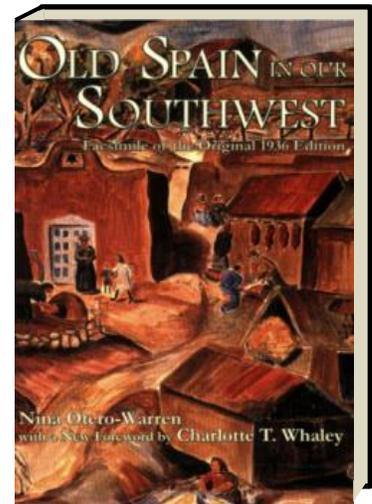
⁶ Roosevelt, Theodore, *The Rough Riders*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899.

ADELINA (NINA) OTERO-WARREN (1881 - 1965)

Some scholars have suggested that a key to understanding Nina Otero-Warren's identity, life, and career are the various names she used throughout her life. She was born into two of the most wealthy and influential families in New Mexico: the Lunas and the Oteros. In addition to her powerful Luna relatives, her cousin, Miguel Otero, was a territorial governor. She used the power of those names, and connections, as needed in her political work.

When she married an Army officer named Rawson Warren, she hyphenated his Anglo name with Otero, and continued to use their combined names off and on throughout her life, even though they separated after two years. Using both names may have provided her more credibility in the Anglo world and allowed her to be an effective cultural broker between the two groups. However, she chose to use Nina Otero, without Warren, when she first published the memoir of her childhood, *Old Spain in Our Southwest*, in 1936.⁷

Nina's life was certainly not all politics. Her circle of friends in the Santa Fe/Taos area included many artists, writers, and intellectuals, and she hosted them at lively weekend gatherings at her home



Cover of facsimile of original 1936 edition, re-published 2006 by Sunstone Press

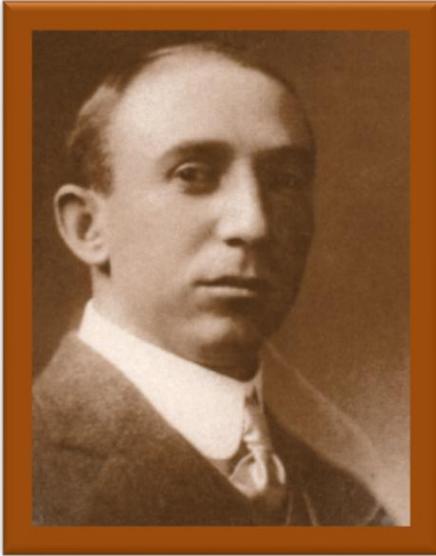
called "Las Dos", on a large ranch outside Santa Fe where she lived happily with her close friend and business partner Mamie Meadors until her death at the age of 84.

⁷ Massman, Ann, "Adelina 'Nina' Otero-Warren: A Spanish-American Cultural Broker", *Journal of the Southwest*, Vol 42 No 4, Winter, 2000.



Photo courtesy Los Lunas Museum

EDUARDO OTERO (1880-1932) and JOSEFITA MANDERFIELD OTERO (1874 –1951)



Eduardo Otero was a favorite of his uncle Solomon, who had no children of his own. Eduardo was with Sol at the sheep camp when his uncle died. After Sol's death, Eduardo became owner of the Luna Mansion, moving into it with his wife, Josefita (Pepe) and her son Ted from a previous marriage. Because Pepe came from a distinguished Santa Fe

family herself, her son Ted was the godson and the namesake of Theodore Roosevelt.

Pepe was a vivacious redhead with an artistic bent. Some of her oil paintings hang in the front room, and she also painted murals on the walls of the back room and the solarium. The picture of a shepherdess in the front room is believed to be a self-portrait of her with her favorite pet dog. She also kept a pet parrot with a habit of gnawing on the woodwork. The bird must have enjoyed the sunny warmth of the solarium,



Photo courtesy
Luna Mansion

because you can still see where it chewed away at a corner of one of the French doors.

Pepe's favorite rocker now sits at the top of the stairs, near the site of her fatal heart attack. Some have reported seeing it rock by itself, or seeing Pepe in other locations around the house, perhaps revisiting her beloved home.

Near her chair is this photo of the mansion before Pepe remodeled it, adding the two-story pillars that are one of its most striking features today, and one of many permanent impressions Pepe left on her home.



Photo courtesy Barbara Bergere Nau



Photo courtesy
University of
Wisconsin

ALDO LEOPOLD (1887 - 1948)

Estella Bergere, the daughter of Eloisa Luna by her second husband, Alfred Bergere, was the wife of Aldo Leopold, one of the founders of the modern environmental movement, and the father of the science of wildlife management.

Leopold was primarily responsible for promoting a new view of man's place in nature. Before Leopold, a common view of conservationists such as Teddy Roosevelt was that the purpose of preserving wilderness areas was to provide opportunities for sport hunting. Leopold advanced the view that man, as a part of nature, has the duty to promote and protect the natural order, including preserving wilderness and predatory species. To promote this approach, he proposed the development of the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico, the first national wilderness area in the U.S. Forest Service. He also founded the Wilderness Society, which today boasts half a million members, and was involved in establishing the newest National Monument in New Mexico, Rio Grande del Norte.

Today, the Aldo Leopold Foundation carries on his work, and the Aldo Leopold Award is named in his honor. All of his five children, Eloisa's grandchildren, became highly respected conservationists and scientists who carried on the work of their father. Three of his children were elected to the National Academy of Sciences, a very prestigious

honor that no other family in America can claim. One of those was his son Luna, born in Albuquerque and named for his mother's family.⁸

⁸The Aldo Leopold Foundation,
www.aldoleopold.org



Luna Leopold

CAST AND CREW

Thanks to all those who have worked many hours to make this show a reality.

- Brian Benoit
- Marie Benoit
- Harmony Brazeal
- Beth Christensen
- Gary Chorre
- Marj Conner
- Alena Evans
- Isabelle Evans
- Jack Fink
- Andy Fuller
- Linda Fuller
- Robert Gallegos
- Sabrina Gutierrez
- Ted Rau
- William Wallace
- John Keisling
- Barbara LoLordo
- Jaden Love
- Courtney Martin
- Peggy McLoughlin
- Clark Metcalf
- Cheryl Ryder
- Frann Scott
- Isaac Sedillo
- Silvino Suarez
- Nancy Strickland
- Pati Terrazas
- Grace Torres

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mansion Players gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in the preparation both of the theatrical piece *An Evening with the Luna Otero Family*, and of the material in this booklet:

- Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts staff, for permission to use images belonging to the museum.
- B.G. Burr, local historian and author, for watching a pre-production version of this work and offering comments.
- Deborah Graham, Director of the Belen Public Library, who brought the Mansion Players and the Luna Mansion together.
- Patty Guggino, PhD, for reading and commenting on an early version of the script.
- Maggie MacDonald, PhD, for the initial information that piqued our interest in local history.
- Richard Melzer, PhD, Professor of History, UNM Valencia, for advice and comments on the script and on this booklet, and for offering many wonderful anecdotes about the Luna and Otero families.
- Barbara Bergere Nau, grand-daughter of Eloisa, for permission to use images from her family collection.
- The Torres family, Tomas Padilla, and the staff of the Luna Mansion Landmark Steakhouse, for permission to use images in their possession, and for allowing and

assisting us in staging our production in the most perfect setting possible: the mansion itself.

THE MANSION PLAYERS



We are a non-profit inter-generational community theater group, dedicated to making live theater available to the residents of Valencia County.

If you would like to work with us, please call Marie/Brian Benoit (505-565 2154) or Frann Scott (505-865-9285)